Compact voice

Local Compacts:
A User Guide

Implementation Checklist

The below checklist contains some of the key principles contained in this document, to use as a reference guide when considering how to implement your Compact.

Awareness: Raising your Compact's profile

- Log, publicise and showcase your Compact successes
- Lead local activity in Compact Week (first full week in November)
- Engage black and minority ethnic and small community groups
- Distribute nationally and locally produced Compact materials (your local Compact, leaflets to explain the Compact, posters, copies of the national Compact and transparency and accountability guide)
- Include regular Compact updates in newsletters
- Brief trustees, councillors, staff in public bodies and voluntary and community groups
- Refer to and display your local Compact at events
- Have a Compact section on local websites that includes your document, explains it and shows how it is being taken forward
- Link your web pages to www.compactvoice.org.uk and send a PDF of your local Compact to Compact Voice.

Resources and responsibility: Who does what and how to pay for it

- Hold regular Compact Group meetings and/or add the Compact to the agenda of other meetings such as team meetings / cross-sector strategic meetings
- Recruit Compact Champions (with defined roles) in public bodies, partnership boards and voluntary groups and/or build up a base of people who you know see the benefits of the Compact and will raise it in their day-to-day work
- Have a contact for more information or problems when using your Compact
- Share costs between partners and programme bids and fund a local Compact officer.

Application and use: Compact approach to partnerships as the normal way of doing business

- Adopt a Compact way of working together for partnership governance
- Link the Compact to the local strategic board and sign up the partners
- Ask all partnerships to consider how they are using the local Compact
- Include Compact information in recruitment packs and induction programmes
- Cover your Compact in training courses and provide joint training on it
- Boost involvement of local groups in service planning, design, delivery, review and improvement
- Compact-proof policy publications and decision making papers.

Compliance: Robust mechanisms for making sure everyone keeps to the Compact

- Establish a dispute resolution process
- Log local Compact non-compliance and analyse causes. Signpost to Local Ombudsman and Compact Advocacy.

Evaluation: Demonstrating what works (and what doesn't)

- Have an evaluation system for measuring how the local Compact is working
- Use relationship polls at events and conduct an annual local Compact survey
- Hold a Joint Annual Review Meeting
- Draw up an Annual Action Plan, which includes examples of what success would look like
- Commit to revising the Compact document after a maximum of 6 years.

Compact Voice
Regent's Wharf
8 All Saints Street
London N1 9RL

Email: **compact@compactvoice.org.uk**
Website: **www.compactvoice.org.uk**
Twitter: **@compactvoice**

£5.00

Compact voice

Section 1
About the Compact

Section 1
About the Compact

In this section:
- About the Compact
- What is a local Compact?
- The national Compact
- A brief history of the Compact
- Geography – which areas do local Compacts cover?

Compact Voice
www.compactvoice.org.uk

Compact Voice is an independent organisation with 2500 members (and rising) that supports the voluntary and community sector with taking forward the Compact. We offer practical help and advice on how to get the Compact working effectively for your organisation and in your area.

We:
- Provide training, resources, information and expert advice on how to get the most from your Compact
- Use our influence to ensure that any changes to the policy landscape, which might affect how the Compact is used, reflect the needs and interests of the sector
- Arrange and attend Compact relevant events and conferences
- Work with government departments to make sure they understand why involving the voluntary and community sector is so important

The Compact Voice Board is made up of representatives from leading voluntary sector organisations, with national, regional and local reach, as well as "front-line" workers. A full list of the Compact Voice board members is available at www.compactvoice.org.uk/board.

Compact Voice's staff consist of a head of team (who liaises with the board members), a manager, a communications officer, a team and communications assistant, a full-time engagement officer based in London (who also covers the South East), and two part-time engagement officers; one providing support in the North West, North East, and Yorkshire & Humber, and one in the South West, West Midlands, and East Midlands.

Compact Voice also works with regional leaders who are based in each of the regions in England. Regional leaders are Compact workers who also receive and share information with Compact Voice, provide and distribute resources and information to organisations within their region, and help Compact Voice better understand what is happening locally.

Compact Voice works alongside NCVO's Compact Advocacy Programme, which helps support better outcomes for voluntary and community groups in their dealings with public sector bodies.

Further information about the Compact Advocacy Programme can be found at: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compactadvocacy.

Does Compact Voice also provide support to the statutory sector?

Compact Voice is the voice of the voluntary sector on the national Compact. Locally, Compact Voice aims to make the Compact work well. Local Compacts help local public sector bodies and voluntary and community sector organisations work together to provide seamless services for the benefit of local communities.

The focus of our services is primarily community groups and local support agencies such as Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS'), but our materials are available for all. By supporting statutory services to use the Compact, Compact Voice supports community groups too.

"We go where the Compact goes."

Kelly Ventress
Communications Officer, Compact Voice

Compact Voice helps facilitate learning between local Compact areas. Please send us your Compact stories so other organisations can learn from what you've done.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for everyone involved in partnerships across sectors in local areas in England, especially those implementing their local Compact agreement.

This includes:

- Voluntary and community sector organisations and social enterprises (also known as civil society organisations)
- Local health services and consortia
- Councils
- Police, fire and rescue, and ambulance services
- Social housing providers
- Further education bodies
- Any other organisations responsible for distributing public money locally, or supporting and resourcing the voluntary and community sector in other ways
- Some business/private sector organisations, especially small and medium enterprises who work within the community or have Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes

It can be used by:

- Those new to the Compact
- Those with experience of working with Compact principles
- Volunteers and staff at every level

What is a local Compact?

Voluntary and community sector organisations and local public sector bodies frequently work together for the benefit of local communities.

A local Compact is a mutually agreed document and approach to partnership working between sectors.

Local Compacts contain principles and commitments that are shared across sectors.

Central themes of local Compacts are:

- Funding arrangements, including procurement
- Consultation and involvement in policy and service development
- Promoting and advancing equality
- Supporting the independence of the voluntary and community sector
- Good volunteering practice
- Working together to continually improve the relationship between sectors

Key strengths of the Compact include:

- Giving a clear sense of how to work together, and what to expect of each other
- Recognition that sectors working together brings more benefit to communities than working alone
- Clear links between national policy and local policy, accompanied by the understanding that each area is different and has its own approach to meeting needs
- Working together to develop, implement and embed a local Compact, building stronger partnerships
- Enabling both sectors to better manage disputes or disagreements by clearly outlining expectations

"What has been achieved by working together on our Compact? There has been a lot more communication between the sectors, there's a better relationship and they have had the chance to meet their parallel officers in the other sector."

Tamsila Tauqir, Compact Action Advisor, Birmingham Voluntary Service Council

Local Compact structures

Local Compacts take the principles of the national Compact (which are outlined below) and interpret them to reflect local need.

Many local Compacts were developed by a 'Compact Group' of decision-makers from local organisations, such as the council, police, NHS, voluntary and community sector organisations and business representatives.

Compact Groups (sometimes known as Compact implementation or steering groups) take the lead on making their Compact relevant to local partnerships, community needs and circumstances. See the section on Compact Groups for more information.

A local Compact is usually supported by a mutually agreed action plan, which may link to other local policies and strategies. Refer to the section on Action Planning for more detailed information.

TREP

Areas may have a dedicated Compact Officer employed by a local statutory or infrastructure organisation, and/or people who have responsibility for their local Compact, ideally as part of their job description. Many areas have Compact Champions, who promote and implement Compact principles and commitments in their organisations and work. **Refer to the section on Compact Officers and Champions for further details.**

In some local areas, individual organisations formally sign-up to a local Compact. In others, lead organisations sign up on behalf of everyone, for example a Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) might sign the Compact on behalf of local community organisations. Everyone who signs up to the Compact is expected to follow Compact principles when working in partnership across sectors.

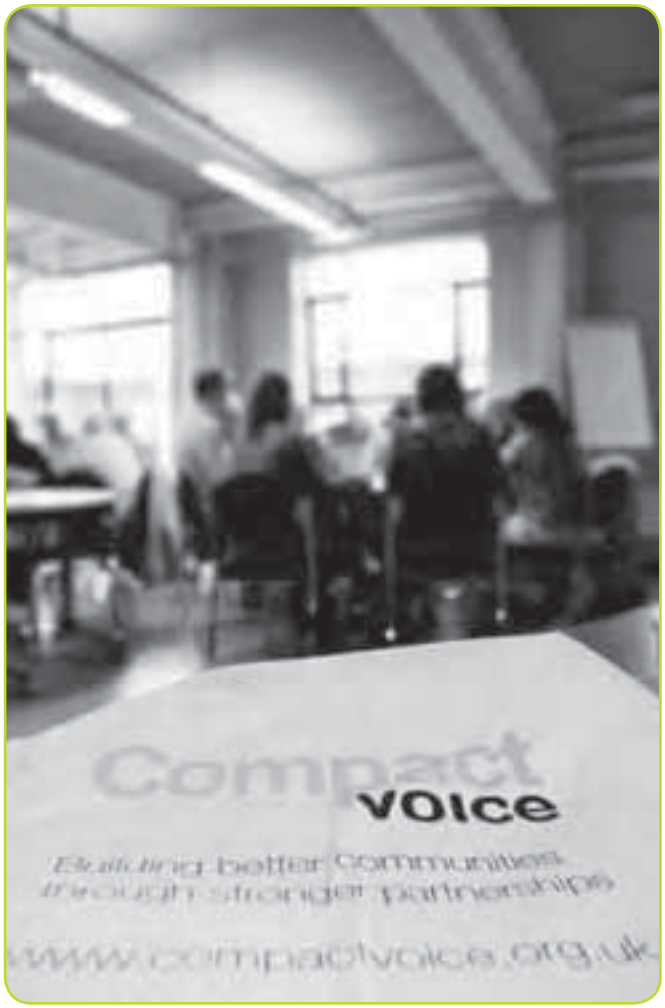
The Compact is designed to be responsive to changes in the environment, such as cuts in public sector funding, changes in funding opportunities from the EU, or different laws coming into effect. The important thing is that the principles in the Compact should be at the heart of partnership working.

The national Compact

The national Compact is the agreement between central government in England and voluntary and community organisations, who are referred to as Civil Society Organisations in the most recent version. This is defined as including charities, social enterprises and voluntary and community sector organisations.

The national Compact focuses on five key outcomes. These are:

- A strong, diverse and independent civil society
- Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services
- Responsive and high-quality programmes and services
- Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services
- An equal and fair society



Specific commitments and undertakings for government and the voluntary and community sector show how each of these outcomes will be delivered.

The principles of the national Compact apply to every public sector body including government departments, Non-Departmental Public Bodies, Arms Length Bodies and Executive Agencies. It is accompanied by an Accountability and Transparency Guide, which outlines steps to take at national and local level when relationships break down, including dispute resolution, internal complaints procedures and ombudsmen functions.

A brief history of the Compact

- The first national Compact was established in 1998 and was developed from recommendations in the Deakin Commission Report which concluded that government should recognise the legitimacy of the voluntary and community sector's diverse roles, as well as its responsibility to promote a healthy sector
- The first national Compact for England was produced in 1998 and was developed by the Home Office and a steering group following a postal consultation with 20,000 community groups
- This was followed by a set of codes that helped clarify how the Compact applied. The codes covered Funding & Procurement, Volunteering, Consultation & Policy Appraisal, Community Groups, Black and Ethnic Minority organisations
- Each local area was encouraged to develop a local Compact, using the national Compact as a basis
- Many local Compact partnerships also developed their own codes
- The national Compact was refreshed in 2009. The set of codes were adapted to a list of principles covering three areas of commitment: Involvement in Policy Development, Allocating Resources and Advancing Equality
- The national Compact was renewed in 2010 following the establishment of the Coalition Government
- The Office for Civil Society (OCS) is responsible for implementing the Compact across every government department. Compact Voice works closely alongside OCS to ensure that the views and needs of the voluntary and community sector are represented and understood
- The Compact continues to enjoy support across the main political parties

Geography - which areas do local Compacts cover?

To find out which Compact is in place in your area go to www.compactvoice.org.uk, or ask your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) or council. NAVCA has a list of local CVS' available on their website: www.navca.org.uk.

- The national Compact discussed throughout this document covers England only
- Local Compacts exist in all 'top tier' local authority areas. 'Top tier' authorities are County Councils, Unitary Authorities, Metropolitan Districts and London Boroughs
- Compacts also exist in second tier local authorities which include District Councils and Borough Councils. The appropriateness of having a Compact at this level will naturally be determined by local circumstances
- Although the participation of Town and Parish Councils in the Compact is important, they usually do not have specific Compacts
- Some regions in England have also developed regional Compacts. Compact workers from across a region sometimes form a regional group, for example the West Midlands Compact Group
- The other nations in the United Kingdom have their own engagement responsibilities and versions of a Compact, for example the Scottish Compact was set up in 1998
- Our Compact is admired and has inspired other agreements. There are versions of the Compact in Sweden, Croatia, Estonia, Denmark, Hungary, France and Poland. There are also agreements between government and civil society organisations in the USA, Canada, the Philippines and Egypt
- In the future there may be a Europe-wide Compact, drawing on the strengths of local and national agreements

Example: Developing a local Compact

Martin Howie, Director,
Voluntary Action Lewisham

Lewisham was one of the first areas to develop a local Compact in 2001. They began by consulting widely with voluntary sector groups and council departments, including 100 in-depth interviews with community groups and council officers.

The council funded a Compact Officer to work part time. A Compact steering group made up of people from the council and voluntary sector umbrella groups was revamped twice. The second time it was changed to include a nominated person from each council directorate. Lewisham did not use the term 'Compact Champions' but the expectation was that the nominated person would spread information throughout their directorate.

The strategic partnership endorsed Compact principles, and the Compact group now includes both the local NHS and mental health trust.

A recent refresh of their Compact took out things no longer relevant and developed a code of practice on commissioning.
To inform the refresh Lewisham Compact group looked at similar work others had done around the country.

Martin Howie says: **"We are fortunate that we have strong partnership relationships in the borough. A supportive mayor makes a huge difference – the person at the top sets the tone."**

How Compact Voice can help:

We can

- Run events and workshops to promote the Compact in your area
- Provide speakers or presentations for your local events
- Share good practice about what works elsewhere
- Provide resources to help you implement your local Compact.

Compact voice

Section 2
Compact groups, officers and champions

Section 2
Compact groups, officers, and champions

In this section:
- An effective Compact group
- Compact group meetings
- Compact officers
- Compact champions

Steps taken to implement a local Compact frequently include:

- Creating a cross-sector Compact group who meet regularly to discuss Compact issues
- Recruiting and empowering advocates to spread Compact knowledge in their organisation and act as the eyes and ears of the Compact in the field. See the section on Compact Champions for further details
- Officers from the Council and from local infrastructure organisations having formal responsibility for implementing the Compact as part of their job description. Some areas fund full time Compact Officers.

Not all areas find this structure works for them. Adapting to meet local need is the essence of the Compact.

An effective Compact group

Local Compacts recognise that many different agencies are responsible for meeting local need. By coming together and developing mutual understanding, partners can improve the quality and efficiency of the services on which local people rely. At the core of most local Compacts is an agreement between the council and the voluntary and community sector. However, for a local Compact to work most effectively, the full spectrum of agencies should be engaged.

The ideal Compact group would be made up of the following members:

- Representatives from each voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisation including Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) and other local community networks or forums. These may include local black and minority ethnic, refugee, faith, advice or creative networks and forums
- Representatives from each council directorate and relevant district/borough councils
- Local politicians including both executive and non-executive councillors
- Council-owned arms length management organisations
- Local housing associations, or a representative from the local housing association group
- Local health trusts and consortia
- Police, fire and rescue services
- Further education providers
- Job Centre Plus
- Some local areas find it helpful to have a business representative, which may include a representative from the local chamber of commerce.

Members of the group should be excellent at passing information to those they represent. It is also vital that representatives are key decision makers. For example the chief executive of the CVS, the assistant director of each council directorate, or the head of the community engagement team. Some areas have an application process and a role description for positions on the Compact group.

Compact group meetings

Because the strength of the Compact group lies in the seniority and decision-making capacity of its members, who expect to meet others at the same senior level as themselves at the Compact meeting, it is important to invest time and effort in ensuring people attend. The Compact group meeting should not be a 'talking shop.' Some ways to help ensure attendance include:

- Establishing what representatives expect from the group and formally agree terms of reference, which should outline the shared mission of the group and which organisations are expected to be represented
- Long and short-term aims for the group
- An interesting, relevant agenda, with good and accurate minutes maintained
- Regular meetings – for example six times a year
- Guest speakers – for example the police explaining how they work with community groups
- A venue that all will feel comfortable attending
- One-to-one meetings with new members before they join
- A clear process for dealing with any issues between members
- Recognition and celebration of achievements

- Acknowledgement that smaller voluntary and community organisations may find it harder than statutory sector officers to take time away from service delivery and fundraising, with efforts made to address any imbalance between sectors
- Giving attendees a clear understanding of the benefits of attending for their organisation and their users.

"Without the Compact and the work of the group there would have been real problems for organisations delivering family and children's services under new contracts. The Compact helped us to ensure fairness and treatment of groups as equal partners in the contracting process."

Mary Gardiner, Chief Executive of Kensington and Chelsea Social Council

Example: Camden Compact group members

The Compact Group is chaired by the executive director of Voluntary Action Camden and the following organisations are represented:

- Camden and Islington Foundation Trust
- Camden Black and Minority Ethnic Alliance
- Camden Community Empowerment Network
- Camden Council
- Castlehaven Community Centre
- Disability in Camden
- Great Ormond Street NHS Foundation Trust
- London Fire Brigade
- Metropolitan Police
- NHS Camden
- Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust
- Somerstown Community Centre
- Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust
- University College London NHS Foundation Trust
- Voluntary Action Camden
- Volunteer Centre Camden

See also:

- The section on communicating the benefits of Compact working to different audiences
- The section on Compact Impact: Action planning, monitoring and evaluating
- The publication Local Compacts at Work which is available in the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk.

Compact officers

Local Compact officers have the Compact as part of their job description or as an explicit aspect of their role. A handful of local areas fund a dedicated Compact officer. Compact officers are usually located in either the council or the local CVS, or share their time between the two.

One main task of a Compact officer is to share information about the Compact. An officer's ability to work comfortably in the statutory and the community and voluntary sector is an asset.

The Compact officer role may be simply to facilitate the work of local Compact champions, or it may focus more on publicity and delivery.

The role may include:

- Servicing the Compact group by arranging meetings and taking minutes
- Managing the Compact budget (if there is one!)
- Publicising the Compact through:
  - organising and delivering training and events;
  - tailored presentations and workshops at different organisations' meetings;
  - web and print publicity and promotion
- Communicating opportunities for engagement or responding to consultations, ensuring that awareness of the Compact is high and that stakeholders are aware of the relevance of the Compact
- Developing an action plan, with clear steps for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the Compact
- Developing tools that help embed Compact principles and commitments, such as a commissioning framework, which sets out good practice for commissioners working with community and voluntary groups.

- Co-ordinating a Compact renewal process or review, for example developing a consultation questionnaire, facilitating discussion groups, co-ordinating a writers group, drafting text to ensure the best possible Compact document
- Advising on compliance and addressing non-compliance
- Staying aware of the Compact nationally and the wider policy and funding landscape.

Difficulties for officers may include having to squeeze the Compact in with competing work commitments, particularly when the role is not full time, or Compact responsibilities form just part of a job description.

Relating the Compact to other policies, strategies and targets can help by showing others that the Compact is integral to good practice and not an additional bureaucratic exercise.

Compact Champions

The role of Compact Champions was devised to address a common barrier to establishing an effective Compact – that it can be difficult to spread understanding of the Compact. By helping people from organisations locally - from front line staff to directors - to understand the Compact, it is possible to generate greater understanding of and support for the Compact, and encourage more people to advocate for its use and inclusion in policy and service design.

It should be recognised that not every Compact refers to or has Compact Champions. Local areas have their own approaches to delivering a local Compact. However, there are a number of examples of local Compacts which have benefited greatly from building up a group of well informed, well connected Compact Champions.

Who can be a Compact Champion?

There are no set requirements for being a Compact Champion. Ideally every public body and larger voluntary and community sector organisation should have at least one named Champion, while councils should have Champions who represent different departments and differing levels of seniority. Elected members are a natural fit, and the mayor is particularly well placed to be a champion as they frequently visit community organisations.

What should Champions do?

- Promote the Compact as a way of working together during the course of their work
- Advise organisations on Compact compliance
- Report non-compliance
- Represent their organisation at Compact relevant meetings
- Report and share good practice
- Signpost people to further resources.

Find further information and examples of Compact Champions in the resources section at www.compactvoice.org.uk.

Example: Surrey Compact Champions

When considering Compact Champions, numbers are often less important than level of engagement. Surrey is one area that has successfully delivered both. With over 300 Champions spanning organisations from both sectors, and a dedicated independent support worker to facilitate engagement and training, Surrey is at the forefront of Compact championing.

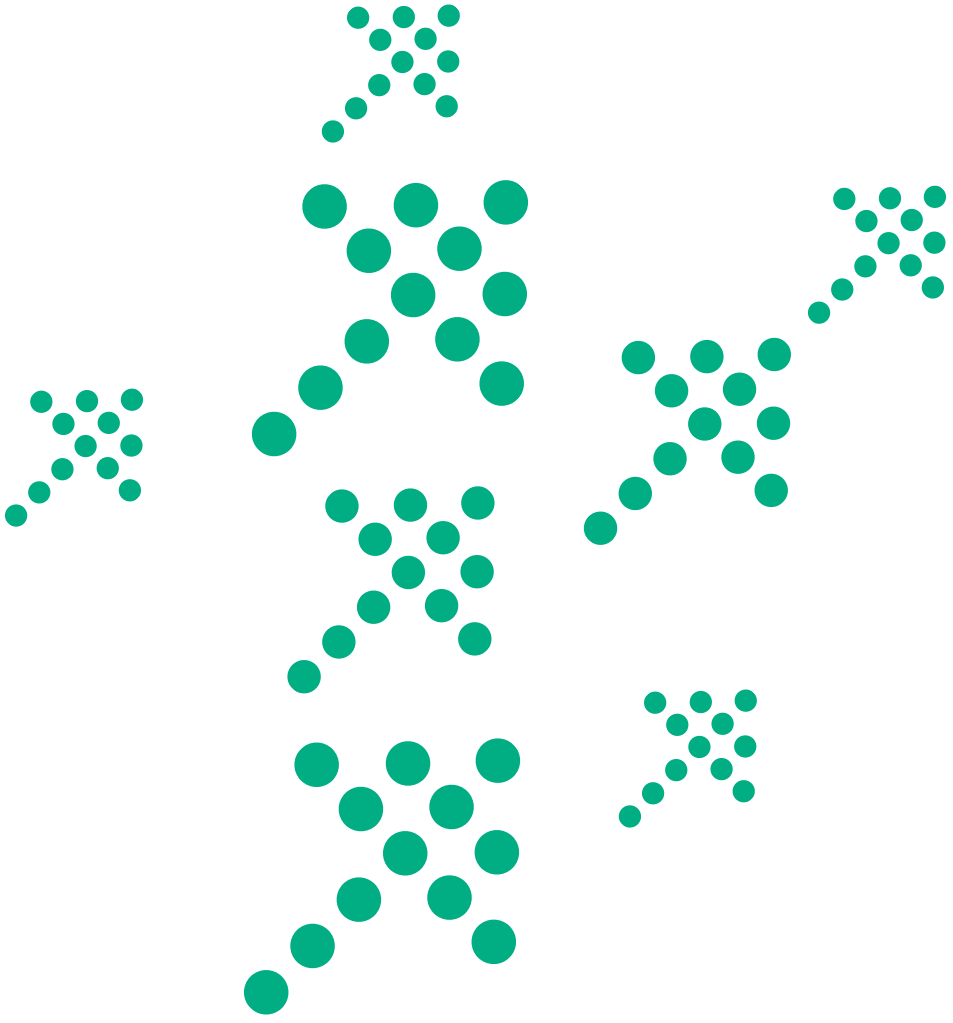
Not surprisingly this has brought advantage to both sectors and the community. Late payment to funded groups was identified as a barrier for performance by the sector. This message was taken on board by the council, thanks to Compact Champions promoting the importance of more prompt payments. In 2008 just 58% of groups were paid on time, but by 2010 this had improved to 95%.

How Compact Voice can help:

We can
- Help you review your Compact group's effectiveness
- Support you to engage new members
- Provide support and resources for Compact officers
- Provide training and support for Compact Champions
- Share good practice about what's working elsewhere
- Provide resources to help you implement your local Compact.

Compact voice

Section 3
Communicating the Compact to different partners



Section 3
Communicating the Compact to different partners

In this section:
- Publication and awareness raising
- Key audiences
- Key Compact messages and how to communicate the benefits of Compact working to different audiences
- Tailored ways to embed the Compact

Clear communication is vital for motivating people to integrate Compact principles and commitments into their partnerships. Developing a communications strategy is recommended.

Three key ways to communicate the Compact are:

- Giving examples of how your Compact is used and what it has achieved
- Illustrating what the Compact could achieve, for example sharing what has worked in other areas
- Showing its relevance to different partners in a tailored way

Tips:

- Be a good listener – treat opposition as legitimate
- Log new questions and share with others involved in your local Compact and Compact Voice
- Use prepared answers

Publicity and awareness raising can take many forms:

- Leaflets and guides. Compact Voice can provide these, or they can be developed locally
- Newsletters
- Email groups
- Social networking
- Websites
- Phone calls
- One-to-one and group meetings about the Compact
- Integrating the Compact into the agenda of other meetings such as partnership and trustee boards, networks and forums (which develop understanding of how the Compact can link to other policies, especially area-wide or national policy)
- Referencing or specifying 'following Compact principles' in job descriptions and grants and commissioning criteria
- Integrating information about the Compact into induction processes and training
- Organising local Compact awards and other Compact events and training, or organising workshops or info sessions at other relevant events – refer also to the 'Events' section of this guide

Key audiences:

- Directors and assistant directors, middle managers and operational staff in statutory bodies
- Small volunteer-led community groups
- Voluntary and community sector staff, trustees and volunteers
- Elected members (Councillors)

A
335

Key Compact messages and how to communicate the benefits of Compact working to different audiences

Topic	Points to communicate	Quotes and examples	Further resources
Commissioning	The Compact helps commissioners do their job better. It is not an extra hurdle. Following Compact principles helps make the commissioning process clear, reduce ambiguity and creates shared expectations. The Compact helps you get what you want. The Commissioning cycle is the process of assessing local need, working out how best to address this, sourcing or procuring services and monitoring and reviewing if the service meets agreed outcomes and needs. Community and voluntary sector organisations often have good solutions to designing and delivering local services, which should be explored, and they often have close contact with service users. They can do a lot to help make consultation and needs analysis more successful.		
Compliance	The Compact has power and can be used to hold public sector bodies to account. Compact commitments have to be met (or a very good reason needs to be formally given for not doing so). Councils are accountable to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Compact is supported by public law. Following the Compact reduces the risk of a public law challenge. The Local Government Ombudsman has the power to investigate reported local Compact breaches.	"Compacts are about much more than just a measure with which one sector can reprimand another if relationships break down. They are about setting out the foundations on which close and collaborative partnerships can be developed which put the community, not sectors, at the centre of service design and delivery." Daniel Fluskey, Compact Advocacy Officer	See the NCVO Website: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compactadvocacy
Social value for investment	The Compact helps ensure you get the maximum social value for investment - there is a strong business case for working according to Compact principles. A Compact way of working - being open about funding and strategy across sectors focused on shared outcomes - helps to maximise the social value which can be gained from limited resources.	"The return on our investment has been value for money. Through the Compact budget we provided some funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide advice for people threatened with mortgage repossession. That's helped prevent people from losing their homes. Another example is our social transport scheme - a multi-agency partnership. We use volunteer drivers, and voluntary sector staff take the bookings. It's benefitting some of the most vulnerable residents – older and disabled people. The VCS are a key part of the success." Dave Webb - Head of Revenues and Housing, Stratford on Avon Council	See the research report 'Economic and Social Benefits of Applying Compact Commitments', which can be downloaded from the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk Research report 'How the Compact Applies to Participatory Budgeting: an Analysis', which can be downloaded from the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk

Topic	Points to communicate	Quotes and examples	Further resources
Partnerships	Working together to assess need and plan services ensures that gaps are addressed and that best practice is followed. This can help deliver services and policies which benefit communities. Local Compacts often include commitments on assessing implications of proposals for the community sector and typically commit partners to working together on identifying gaps, avoiding duplication, using resources effectively and providing better services. The Compact is about working in partnership to improve services for local communities. The voluntary and community sector can help get opinions of different communities, get messages to the right audience and feed back service users' experience. Compact principles and commitments provide a ready-made, straightforward, and easy to follow framework for cross-sector partnerships.	"Engaging and involving the voluntary and community sector in designing services from the earliest possible point recognises that such groups often have significant understanding and connection with communities." Adam Pickering - Engagement Officer, Compact Voice	
Involvement	Being involved in Compact related events and meetings is a way of connecting with other sectors – or other parts of your own sector. It's a way in to what goes on locally; to information, insight, resources, local communities and networks. Involvement with the Compact can help forge links with others who want to work with the same members of the public. Winning or organising Compact awards makes organisations and partnerships look good as well as promoting actions and activities.	See the 'Working together to tackle shared issues' example at the end of this section.	
Cuts Decommissioning	Good relations with the voluntary and community sector can bring tangible benefits to the statutory sector. A Compact way of working when times are tough can leave a legacy that continues to pay dividends long after testing economic conditions pass. Ensuring that any cuts are made in a Compact compliant way (for example giving three months' notice) makes the process straightforward and protects against challenge. Working with community groups to assess the potential impact of cuts can significantly help lessen the impact on the public.	"Using the Compact prevented unlawful reductions to VCS organisations last year – in particular funding to approximately 13 BME day centres has been protected. The issue certainly engaged a section of the VCS that previously were not active under our local Compact. Hopefully bringing the results of our impact assessment to the eyes of elected members will increase recognition of the vital role played by these organisations." Paul Tolley - Chief Executive, Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action	See the publication 'Local Compacts at Work' available from the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk
Infrastructure organisations	The Compact was developed specifically to support community groups and infrastructure organisations. **Tip:** Point out exactly where your Compact mentions community groups / infrastructure. **Tip:** Use examples of how it relates to each role's work.		For information tailored to Black and Minority Ethnic organisations, see Voice4Change England's website, which has a page called 'The Compact and You': www.voice4change-england.co.uk See the research report 'Working Better Together: Implementation guide for community groups and local public bodies', available in the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk

Topic	Points to communicate	Quotes and examples	Further resources
Voluntary and community groups	The national Compact emphasises the importance of grants and help in kind. "3.2: Consider a wide range of ways to fund or resource Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including grants, contracts, loan finance, use of premises and so on. Work to remove barriers that may prevent CSOs accessing government funding, thereby enabling smaller organisations to become involved in delivering services where they are best placed to achieve the desired outcomes."	"We've used our Compact to develop new grants schemes, and it was successfully invoked to obtain a contract extension and a budget line for a community based project." Sarah Prior - Compact Officer, Compact for Devon	See the report 'Working Better Together: Implementation guide for community groups and local public bodies', available in the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk
Community Groups CVS' Statutory Bodies, especially those involved in conducting consultations	The Compact is a "way in" for more constructive dealings with the Council, police, NHS or other services. If community groups feel they get sidelined or only asked for opinions on particular issues, the Compact could be a way of becoming more of a partner. Compact events and meetings are a good opportunity to meet and network with people from other sectors.	"In terms of police, fire and NHS, I think they probably already know that the local community is very important to their activities so the Compact is a way of connecting with them, 'selling' their services, making friends, getting to know the community they serve and want to be on the right side of." Ingela Andersson – Compact Advocacy, NCVO	See the report 'Working Better Together: Implementation guide for community groups and local public bodies', available in the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk
Council and councillors	The Compact is non-party political. The three major political parties have expressed their support for the Compact, and many consider one of its strengths to be its non-political nature.		
Council and councillors	The Compact can help provide greater accountability for what is happening within the community by strengthening the links between the voluntary sector and elected members. Better dialogue between elected members and representatives from the voluntary and community sector not only helps to positively influence local policies, but should also be seen as a democratic necessity. **Tip:** Make sure you keep elected members informed. They can also help spread the message to community groups during visits and publicity work. **Tip:** Councillors should be involved in Compact development, kept regularly briefed (especially newly elected members) and each main party group should be offered a seat on the Compact Group. Avoid your Compact being too closely aligned with any one political party or personality.	'Elected members fit in three categories. They are active citizens, they are community focussed like small groups are, and they are also statutory sector.' Saffi Price – Compact Development Worker, Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council 'Having member support and high level senior management support in the county has been helpful. The leader is very supportive of the Compact and we co-plan with the voluntary sector a lot. There is also a cabinet member with responsibility for the voluntary sector.' Monica Wambu, Surrey County Council	

Topic	Points to communicate	Quotes and examples	Further resources
Health services	The straightforward guidance and 'ground rules' of the Compact will help Commissioning boards engage with community groups in a meaningful and structured way that is likely to improve health outcomes because commissioning is based on need. A Compact way of working results in better policies and engagement with patients and stakeholders. The Compact can help Health Services to be flexible, responsive, and based around the patient. Community groups can address health inequalities by sharing their knowledge of the communities they represent and are trusted by, and can work with you to improve techniques for getting health messages across. Working with Community groups can help make efficiency savings. The Compact can help the relationship with the wider organisations that help a hospital run, especially services run by volunteers. If you treat them well you can engage them and get a better hospital. Local Compact partnership meetings and events provide a forum that can help develop practical ways of working together, such as health groups having sessions at surgeries or neighbourhood groups giving key messages to their community, such as keeping hospital appointments. **Tip:** Two parts of the NHS have particular relevance to the Compact: service provision and commissioning. Each will have a different relationship with the community and voluntary sector and will use different elements of the Compact at different times.	See the example from 'Working together to tackle shared issues' at the end of this section.	
Police	Police already work closely with charities such as Neighbourhood Watch and Victim Support, but may not be aware of the benefits of working with small local community groups. Working with community groups helps police identify their concerns and the priorities of local communities and to solve the problems that matter to them. It can also help police to gain insight into how to address negative perceptions of the police. The Compact is the structure that supports these relationships. The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) Citizen Focus and Neighbourhood Policing Programme Team aim to increase engagement with the public and provide guidance on how police can do this in partnership with community groups. They advocate the use of the Compact, calling it an 'informal but legitimate tool.' **Tip:** Police may be pro-partnership but not necessarily relate it to a good Compact. Show how Compact partnerships have addressed police priorities such as anti-social behaviour, and preventing domestic violence and hate crime.	See the example from 'Working together to tackle shared issues' at the end of this section.	

Topic	Points to communicate	Quotes and examples	Further resources
Fire and rescue service	Community groups have a strong role to play in the prevention of fires and accidents, for example by helping with home fire safety checks for people with little or no English.	In Haringey, for example, a local community group took the 'middle ground' between the fire service and the Somali community. They helped give the community a better understanding of what they can do in their homes to keep them safe from fire.	
Housing associations	Housing associations are usually keen to support Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) who advocate for their local neighbourhood, and work to make improvements. Using Compact principles around community involvement can help develop TRAs and neighbourhood-based initiatives by training TRA members or housing officers on how to run a properly constituted TRA, how to raise funds or even how to put on community events. The local CVS will often run training like this. **Tip:** Housing associations may also be interested in how Compact partnerships have addressed anti-social behaviour, see the 'Working together to tackle shared issues' example at the end of this section, and the Islington example in the events section. **Tip:** Housing providers often have documents called 'tenant participation Compacts.' Make it clear that these are not what you mean by your Local Compact. **Tip:** Larger housing associations are considered statutory because unlike private landlords they manage large amounts of public money.		
Private sector	Local private sector businesses are in many ways indistinguishable from charities and community groups in providing employment, training and advice and other local benefits. They may also have a strong sense of corporate social responsibility and want to develop partnerships with charities. The Compact may help small businesses to develop local contracts and give insight into the statutory sector. The national Compact advocates equal treatment across sectors when tendering for contracts. **Tip:** Invite businesses to events, and focus some workshops on business issues rather than simply community and voluntary sector issues. **Tip:** The local chamber of commerce can advise on the different ways of relating to businesses, such as communicating successfully. **Tip:** Point out the benefits but emphasise that the Compact is not a legal requirement. Larger private sector businesses, however, may need to be reminded in writing that if they are receiving public money / distributing funds on the government's behalf they must adhere to commitments in the national Compact and apply the Compact when distributing European Union funding. Regarding subcontracting – Compact principles are written into the contracts of some government departments.		

Tailored ways to embed the Compact

Example: Haringey CVS (HAVCO)'s Compact Implementation Toolkit

"A lot of issues with the Compact are to do with communications. Sometimes the problem with the Compact is accessibility. It's a framework, but understanding how you implement the framework is a different story."
Darren Thomas, Compact Project Officer Haringey CVS (HAVCO)

HAVCO felt that community groups may not fully understand the Compact even though they might be working in Compact compliant ways. In response they developed a Compact toolkit for the voluntary and community sector. The toolkit:

- Provides a clear method for implementing Compact principles
- Brings the Compact alive by showing practical examples of what each of the principles means
- Allows organisations to internally assess and improve their ways of working

The toolkit sits alongside a statutory sector toolkit that was used to improve council policies. Developing the toolkit took a couple of months.

Feedback was provided by the Compact Implementation Group, which included a wide range of local advocates and representatives.

Darren Thomas, Compact Officer, said the Compact is part of an approach which helps to modernise public services:

'The toolkit helps to not only improve partnership working but also voluntary and community organisations ability to deliver public services in partnership. Ultimately local citizens are the ones to benefit. Working together in this way can enhance lives, reduce inequality, and improve chances. It's basically about meeting local need and providing value for money.'

Example: Solihull Compact communications strategy

Sixteen months after launching their refreshed Compact, a clear trend had emerged amongst Solihull organisations: those who were involved in developing the Compact had stayed interested and seen the benefits. But small organisations that were farthest away from the Compact design process had remained unaware and largely uninvolved.

Faisal Hussain, Head of Community and Voluntary Relations at Solihull Council, sees Compact awareness as akin to 'ripples emanating from the centre. In other words, the Compact message gets weaker as it is passed along and if people don't know about something, or how it applies to them, then they can't or won't use it. Showing what it can achieve for each organisation is key to getting the core messages of the Compact across to a wide audience.'

Attempts to promote the Compact were being made but only at an organisational level. Rather than every organisation developing a separate strategy the implementation group created a unified strategy with objectives for each organisation to report against every quarter. The Communications Strategy was launched and greater awareness of Compact followed.

Example: Working together to tackle shared issues

Some young people in the Streetley area of Walsall were engaging in antisocial behaviour, damaging property in the local park and pavilion. This behaviour included spraying graffiti, displaying hostility towards local residents and engaging in under-age drinking.

The Local Policing Unit, Community Cohesion Department and West Midlands Neighbourhood Watch County Association (a registered charity) used their local Compact to take a unified approach to the problem, agreeing to pool their resources and work more closely together. They talked with the young people and provided them with alternative activities, got local fire and rescue and youth services involved, and also the NHS, who were working towards tackling obesity and teenage pregnancy.

This proactive approach resulted in young people becoming involved in different projects, particularly participating in barbecues and games in the park, and allowed young and older people to talk about the problems they had encountered in the park, which made the teenagers aware of how they were being antisocial. Sergeant Chris Sprague from Walsall Local Policing Unit stated that Anti-Social Behaviour reports had been slashed by 50 percent since the introduction of the 'barbecue in the park' initiative.

The good work continues in the area where the partnerships are setting up a gym for young people. PC Gary Hall from the Community Cohesion Team said: **"This is a fantastic way of showing that partnerships working together can be extremely beneficial to the community and it was a pleasure for me to bring the partners together to succeed in this venture."**

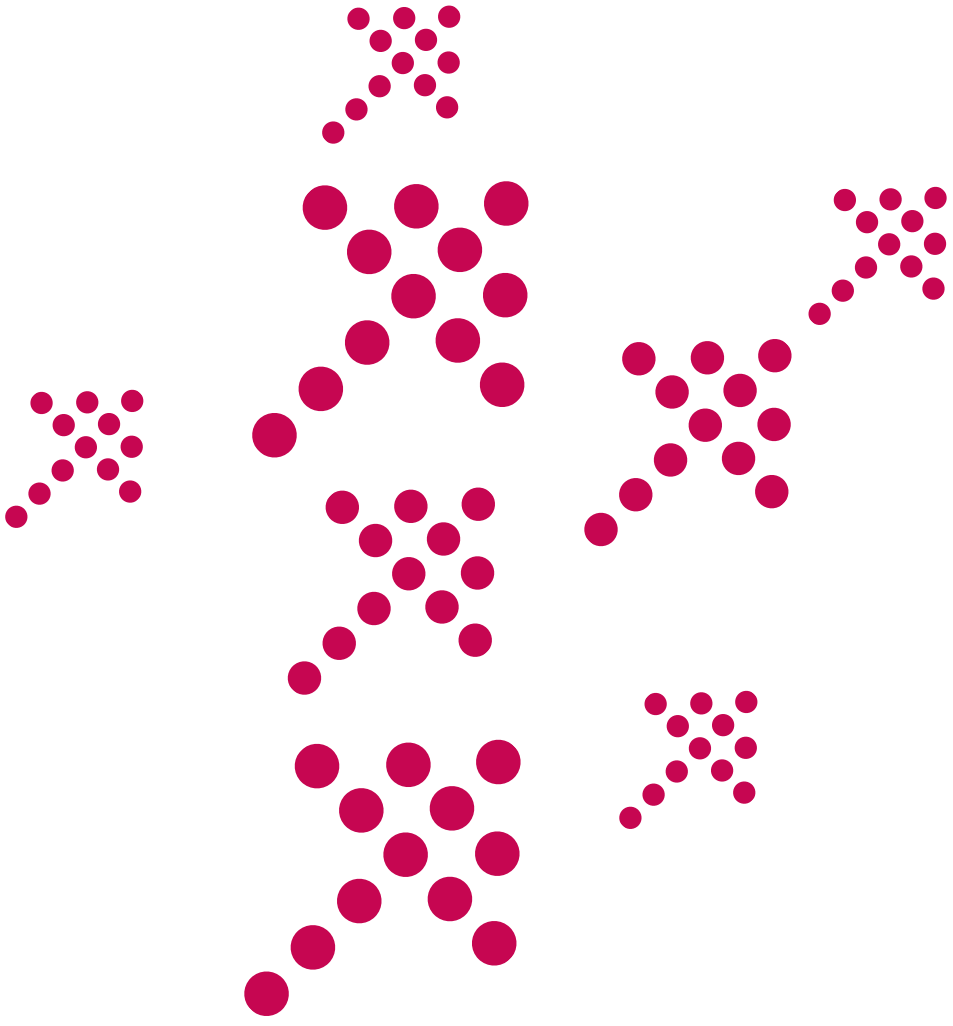
How Compact Voice can help:

We can

- Provide examples and case studies relevant to different audiences
- Provide information for newsletters and press releases
- Provide leaflets and other resources
- Attend key meetings in your area.

Compact voice

Section 4
Events and training



Section 4
Events and training

In this section:
- Compact Voice's Events & Training Programme
- Tips for organising a successful Compact event

Events and training help people understand the Compact, what it offers them, how it integrates into their work, and how they can contribute to partnership working in their day-to-day activities.

"Some agencies such as the police and hospitals don't fund the sector so the benefits of being involved in the Compact are not immediately obvious. Our local Compact awards scheme brought them into the fold."

Rob Allison, Director of Policy and Partnership, Voluntary Action Coventry

Compact Voice's events and training programme

Compact Voice organises events which showcase examples of good practice. We can also support local events and deliver training.

We offer the following free services:

- Talks developed to cover the most popular subjects requested by our members. We are more than happy to discuss developing bespoke talks and presentations too
- Training modules and targeted programmes of support, for example 'Selling the Compact,' or 'Renewing your Compact'

Talks and training can be booked for free using our speaker request form at www.compactvoice.org.uk/supportmenu.

Many areas plan local or regional Compact events, such as a small training session, an awards ceremony, an annual review event, or a scoping event to inform a Compact update. Award events are often a chance to showcase achievements to a wide audience. Compact Week takes place during the first full week in November. Many local events (including local Compact awards) focus on the Compact and raise its profile.

It can be useful to:

- Train people to be able to pass the Compact message on
- Have an event/training for specific sectors, or for particular groups such as BME groups
- Bring together representatives from different sectors and levels of employment. This provides a valuable chance for people to meet and learn from others they might not have the opportunity to meet in their day-to-day work
- Integrate a Compact session with wider events, for example, a workshop on how the Compact can contribute to equality at an event about the Equality Act

Local Compact events can typically include:

- Guest speakers for people to learn from (and to challenge)
- Discussion groups to share insight on particular local issues or how to implement policy
- Informal opportunities to network (ideally over refreshments)

Compact Voice provides a menu of information and opportunities, showing some of the training programmes we provide. This offers useful tips about running similarly themed events. This is available online at www.compactvoice.org.uk/supportmenu.

Tips for organising a successful Compact event

1. Define your audience.
DO make sure you're clear on who you want to attend your event, and what the benefit to them is. Some events may require different levels of Compact knowledge or relate to a specific area of interest or expertise. Those who can't engage meaningfully may feel disenfranchised and bringing them up to speed could limit the usefulness of the event to others.
DON'T limit the remit of all Compact events by targeting only a generic audience. While it is important to bring everyone together from time-to-time there can be advantages in targeting specific audiences.

2. Mix up the sectors.
DO invite representatives from the statutory and voluntary sectors, and any relevant private sector representatives in your area: this will provide an opportunity for them to network and build working relationships.
DON'T fall into the trap of thinking that it is easier to speak to different sectors separately. A core function of Compact events should be to help the different sectors see things from each others point of view.

3. Outline why you are having events.
DO think about what you'd like your outcome to be. Having a clear sense of what you want to get out of the event and why you are hosting it in the first place can help you ensure that you and your participants benefit as much as possible.
DON'T simply hold Compact events for the sake of it. If you are not clear about what everyone is getting out of an event then the likelihood is that they will be getting very little – this can damage perceptions about your local Compact.

4. Make it topical.
DO frame your events in response to issues affecting partnership working in your area. Identify themes for events by asking yourself questions like: what has been achieved locally over the past year? What are the current myths, challenges and opportunities for cross sector partnerships?

DON'T feel as though you have to talk about the Compact in isolation. Linking the Compact in with issues people are interested in can be a great way to demonstrate how relevant the Compact is.

5. Get the word out.
DO brief your team on any events so that they can tell external audiences when they engage with them during the course of their work. If you are attending other people's events, mention your event there and ask if you could insert something in their delegate pack about your event. Other examples of spreading the word are: organisations' e-newsletters, individual mailing lists (make sure you paste the list into the BCC section of an email), or personal emails (good for elected members), and council and NHS newsletters. Find out who the communications officers are and ask them when their deadlines are.
DON'T simply pitch the event to the "usual suspects" who always attend.

6. Go to the audience.
DO think tactically about finding your audience. If you find that people don't respond well to events about the Compact but that they are interested in commissioning events, general voluntary and community sector conferences or training sessions, then either re-brand your event accordingly linking it to the Compact, or organise presentations highlighting links with the Compact at other events.

For more ideas, see Section 3: 'Communicating the Compact to different audiences.'

Example: Islington Compact Awards

Islington developed local awards to recognise outstanding examples of partnership work happening in the area.

The awards were judged by the Chair of the local NHS, the Assistant Director of Strategic Planning and Regeneration from Islington Council, and the CEO of the local CVS, Voluntary Action Islington.

The awards ceremony, held in the Town Hall, attracted 70 people and the presentations were made by the leader of the Council and the mayor.

A press release, which was drafted in partnership by the CVS and a council communications officer, helped local papers pick up on award winners. A summary of the winners work and photographs were sent to all participants, attendees and everyone in the local CVS newsgroup.

The awards ceremony was an enjoyable way for community groups and the statutory sector to learn about each other and provided a rare opportunity to honour very important partnership work. Winners remarked that they had not realised what positive impact the recognition of their partnership would have – especially on funding applications.

How Compact Voice can help:

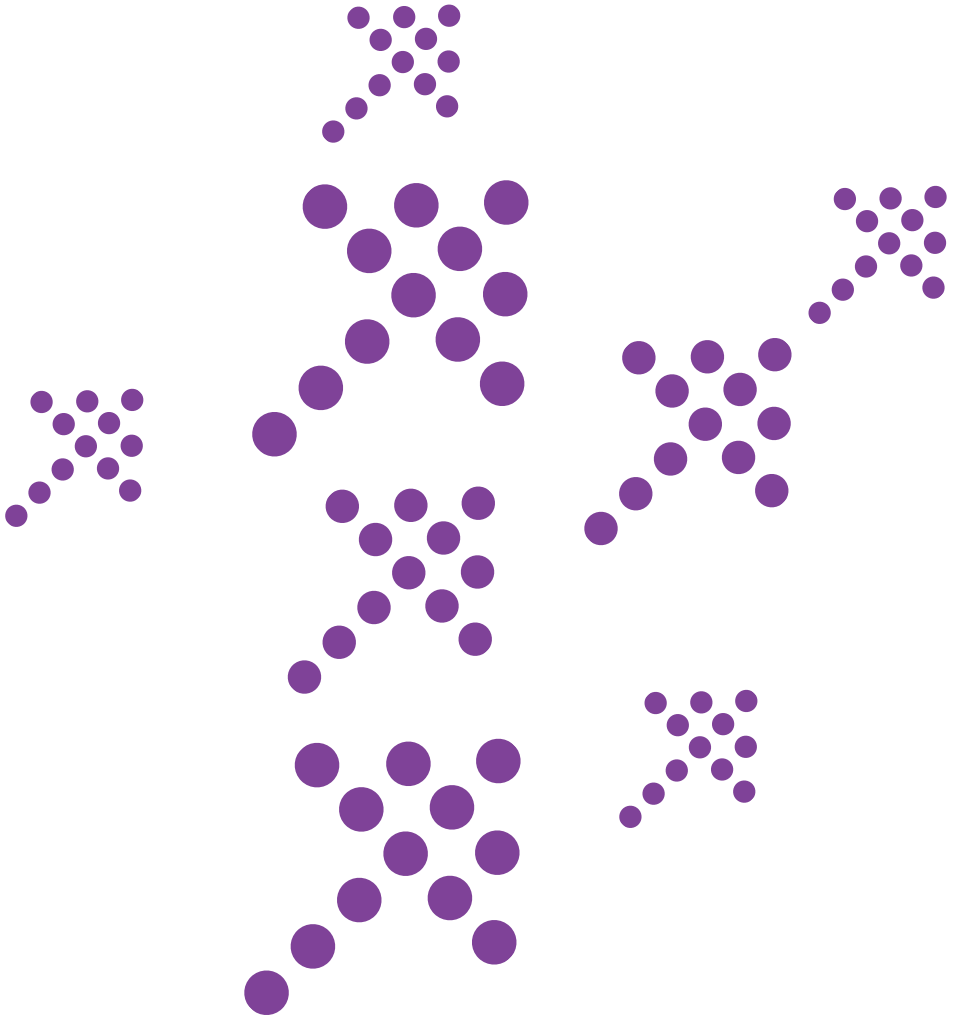
We can

- Run training sessions for you
- Provide materials such as case studies and presentations for your events
- Help plan your events
- Provide speakers for your local events.

Compact voice

Section 5

Compact Impact: Action planning, monitoring and evaluating



Section 5
Compact Impact: Action planning, monitoring and evaluating

In this section:
- Compact action plans
- Evaluating your Compact
- Scorecard - How well does your partnership work?

An action plan is essential for making local Compacts work. It shows clearly what is needed from partners to progress your local Compact, is a key tool for monitoring progress and is the basis for showcasing your successes.

"The picture I use to help explain the Compact is a house. The Compact is the foundation stone. The trouble is that foundation stones are buried in the ground. People want to know 'what actually has the Compact done?' but it is tricky to separate out the specific effect of the Compact from other initiatives. The fact that items on our action plan have happened is what matters most."

Martin Howie, Director,
Voluntary Action Lewisham

A Compact action plan can be something shared widely across the Compact partnership, or just for the reference of the Compact group. It can be useful for organisations or departments to develop their own action plan detailing how to embed Compact principles in day-to-day work and monitor implementation using internal processes. For more details, see the Calderdale example opposite.

Common headings for an action plan include: funding, long-term financial planning, full cost recovery, premises, information technology, identifying available non-financial support opportunities, reducing regulation and simplifying processes.

Ask each partner their biggest challenge and what they most want to achieve – link these with consideration of strategies and activities to address community engagement, partnerships and the role of the voluntary and community sector. These can then be combined into an action plan.

As the starting point, develop a short action plan with a few quick wins in the coming year and include agreeing a proper action plan. Consider having an ambitious 3 year rolling action plan and include what success will look like to ease subsequent evaluation.

Example: Calderdale's approach to action planning

Soo Nevison, Chief Officer, Voluntary Action Calderdale

Calderdale wanted to get away from an action plan that mentioned specific partners, and instead create one which emphasised working together. Below is an example of the action plan for Calderdale's Compact group.

For specific partners they produced an implementation toolkit, containing checklists. For example:

Task	Already doing this	Need to work on this by…
Provide a clear rationale for all funding decisions		
Well managed and transparent application and tendering processes, which are proportionate to the desired objectives and outcomes of programmes		
Do we agree with partners how outcomes, including the social, environmental or economic value, will be monitored before a contract or funding agreement is made?		
Do we ensure that monitoring and reporting is relevant and proportionate to the nature and size of the opportunity?		
Are we clear about what information is being asked for, and why and how it will be used?		

Example: Excerpt from Calderdale's Compact action plan

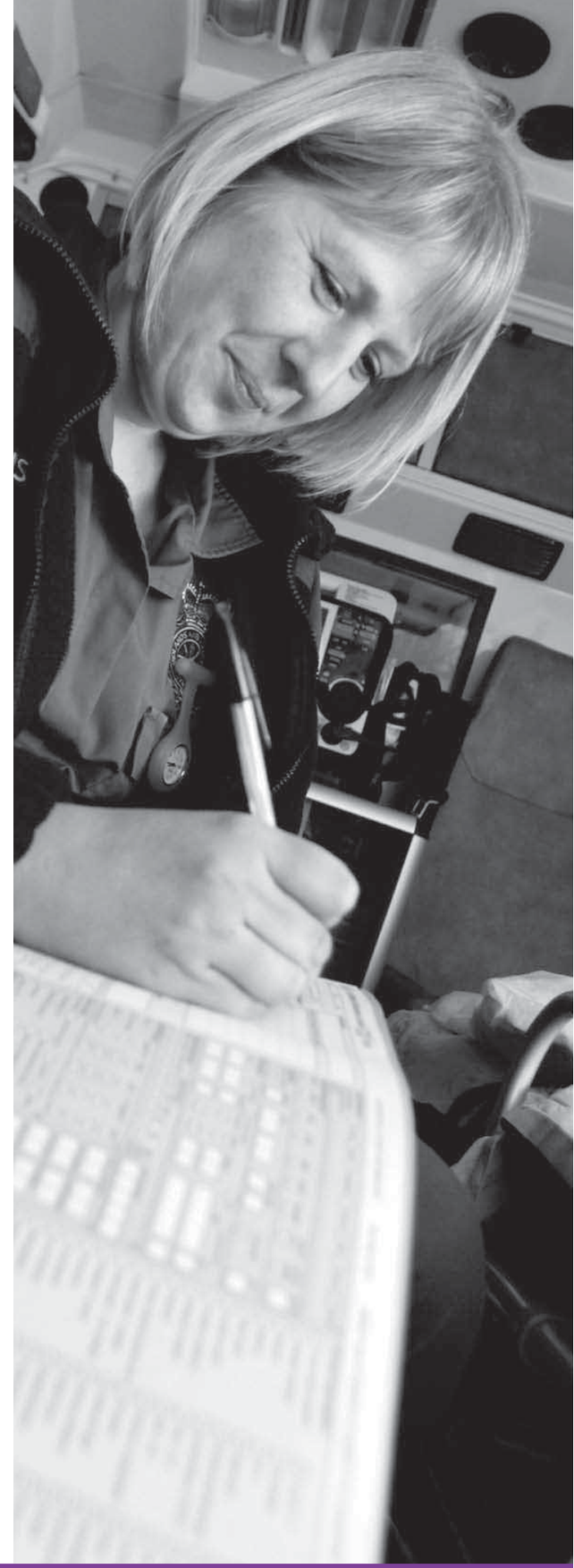
Objective	Action required	Timescale	Lead partner	Traffic Light
1. Awareness - Raising the Compact's profile				
Promotion of the Calderdale Compact and Compact Toolkit	Publicity re: Compact			
	Produce one article in Calderdale per quarter focussing on public/private/voluntary/national or local issues			
	Compact presence at relevant partnership events			
	Compact Week Event			
	Provide opportunities for sign-up to Calderdale at all partner events			
2. Resources and Responsibility – Who does what and how you will pay for it				
Record and monitor resources from partners	Budget for 10/11 agreed and managed by CMBC			
Secure existing and/or additional resources	Member organisations and partners identify resources to support delivery of Compact			
	Other sources – private sector resources to support the Compact – e.g. promotion on business websites			

Example: Camden Compact group's delivery overview

Camden Compact group developed an overview guide to their local Compact, which lists different partners who are involved in working together, and how they deliver key aspects of better partnership working between the sectors.

Delivery overview

Partners / Themes	Children, Schools & Families	Housing & Adult Social Care	Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS)	Culture & Environment	NHS Camden	Metropolitan Police
Stronger partnerships & collaboration between sectors	Resourcing of VCS network and children & families development work	VCS involvement in commissioning groups, safeguarding board etc. Access to training for VCS	Supporting networks, fair selection processes for VCS partnership members. Range of development and capacity building initiatives for involvement & joint working	Inclusion of VCS in Council's Equality Impact Assessment framework. Strategic Liaison Group. Capacity building support	Staff involvement in VCS forums. Involvement of VCS in specific work areas and events. Work with the LINk	VCS representation on ward panels
Consultation & influencing decision making	Consultation with VCS on strategic plans, commissioning & policy development	Joint commissioning, events & research with VCS. VCS inclusion on strategic & work groups	Meetings, seminars, outreach work increasing VCS knowledge & involvement. Research & providing evidence	Piloting new monitoring approaches. Partnership approach to developing outcomes	Annual joint event on commissioning & direction of travel. VCS involvement in consultation on plans & strategies	
Infrastructure	Resourcing work for effective VCS involvement. Supporting range of strategic sub boards with VCS members	Providing training opportunities for VCS in key policy areas. VCS involvement in community safety work programme	Capacity building and development across Action Plan themes	Resourcing organisations to alleviate economic hardship	Work to embed Compact principles in NHS strategy documents	
Funding relationships & service delivery	Grants used to allocate capital funding. Training for VCS to bid according to competitive criteria. 3 year contracts where able	Outcomes monitoring approaches. Case by case basis for grants or commissioning. Full cost recovery basis	Outcomes & outcomes based commissioning development. Campaigning for mixed economy of funding	Review of relationship with VCS. 3.5 year contracts in place & 9 month extensions granted	NHS Camden Commercial Strategy with commitment to Compact. Briefings & procurement events attended by VCS	
Volunteering	Monitoring of providers using & supporting volunteers. Volunteering featured in some contracts		Promotion, coordination & management of range of volunteering opportunities. Training & mentoring for volunteers & managers	Support to volunteer led initiatives. Joint promotional events with VCS. Appointment of volunteer coordinator	Opportunities for VCS to develop skills for health related volunteering	Opportunities developed to be promoted through VCS



Evaluating your Compact

"Information gathering is crucial for the effective implementation of the Compact locally and nationally. While quantitative data is useful (for example, how many Champions, number of noncompliance issues recorded and resolved) it is the collection and sharing of experiences, perceptions and good and bad practice that adds most value. This qualitative information is the currency which enables a Compact to improve by allowing ideas to spread and trends to be identified."

Adam Pickering,
Engagement Officer

A local Compact does not – in and of itself – bring about positive change. It is the commitment and hard work of those who use and advocate for it that helps spread its message and embed continuous improvements in partnership working. It is essential to monitor the effectiveness of local Compacts in order to identify where gaps in relationships may affect the quality of services to communities, and how they can be improved.

Why evaluate your Compact?

The more you know about what is happening on the ground, what the barriers are to better Compact working and what issues are looming on the horizon, the more effective you will be in implementing your Compact.

Reasons to evaluate your Compact:

- To benchmark and learn where you are
- To learn what works and what doesn't
- To find good practice and report it
- To give early warning of problems which are arising
- To find out what people really think – do perceptions match the facts? If not why do people think what they do?
- Because people act differently when they know their performance is being monitored – asking about performance can act as a wake-up call
- It will allow you to compare performance between organisations and areas and track progress from your previous results

What should you evaluate?

It is helpful for those involved with a Compact to focus on achievable outcomes that are measurable. There are a number of approaches to deciding this. You could simply ask overarching questions and then think about what measures would allow you to answer them. For example:

Question: Are partners satisfied with the Compact?
Measure: Partners rate satisfaction level from 1 – 5.

Or,

Question: What is the evidence that partners are effectively implementing our Compact?
Measure: Number of non-compliance cases, number of champions.

How to evaluate your Compact

Annual Local Compact Survey: Surveys can enable you to collect information quickly and easily, especially benchmarking information. As the following example shows there are additional benefits.

Example: Essex County Council Compact survey

Simon Banks, Community Planning and Engagement Officer at Essex County Council found a number of advantages to undertaking a survey about the Essex Compact. The survey acted as a reminder for people to take action: for example, a question about whether the Compact was included in inductions and in contracts encouraged people to use it.

The survey also revealed new trends.
"The main type of complaint was about corners being cut in procurement of services, rather than about grant cuts where Compact breaches seemed rarer".

This information is crucial in understanding barriers to good relationships between the sectors – reading between the lines to locate the realities behind negative perceptions and suggest positive actions to be taken.

Compact Voice Annual Survey: Compact Voice undertakes a national survey of local Compacts. This allows you to compare your local Compact with others. For more information visit www.compactvoice.org.uk.

Overview and Scrutiny: Councillors are well placed as community leaders to be able to assess how well a Compact is being implemented within and without the council. Scrutiny reviews have led to the recognition of weaknesses and subsequent improvements in Compact working in Thurrock, Bristol and Hertfordshire. See also the publication Local Compacts at Work which can be found in the Resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk.

Involving people in the evaluation process

One of the best ways to measure the effectiveness of a Compact is to ask the people who use it (or who should be using it) what they think about it.

There are lots of options to choose from when consulting an audience, from social networking tools to facilitated evaluation sessions (which Compact Voice can deliver – see the 'support' section of www.compactvoice.org.uk). However, there are some which are particularly useful. The following table provides a framework for assessing how well a local Compact is working:

How well does your partnership work? Ways of evaluating your Compact

1 = not effective, 5 = very effective

	1	2	3	4	5
(a) Compact Champions	None or few	Sufficient, recruited in sector & public bodies	Local training resource providing training to all new Champions	Supported and active	Networked, regularly briefed and playing an increasingly effective role
(b) Partnership and engagement	Partners have little knowledge & skills on how to engage	Training delivered & issues addressed by partners	Opportunities for joint working are being seized. Sector well positioned, skilled, led & supported to engage productively	Involvement in policy and processes boosted in quality and quantity	A wide range of local groups from both sectors, including community, BME and faith groups are increasingly engaging effectively
(c) Creating and spreading good practice	Little exists or is being developed	Development of good practice. Effective promotional initiatives taken	Partners improving their compliance & logging good practice	Compact proofing of decisions and policies; high compliance	Compact wins and outcomes are growing and well publicised locally and with other areas; case studies on Compact Voice website
(d) Tools and processes	Little or no formalised processes for implementing the Compact	Implementation group is effective and infrastructure is able to coordinate cross sector collaboration	Established links to local partnerships across a range of issues	Effective dispute resolution processes agreed	Ongoing development with good use of tools
(e) Impact	Low awareness, knowledge and use of Compact & working together	All partners recognise Compact's value and support it being implemented at all levels	Compact Group delivering action plan that links with key strategies & processes	Partners working successfully towards full potential of Compact	Compact making significant difference to policy development, equalities, resource allocation and outcomes

How Compact Voice can help:

We can

- Help you develop an action plan
- Share good practice about what's working well elsewhere
- Facilitate evaluation sessions
- Help you develop an evaluation framework
- Provide resources to help you evaluate the impact of your local Compact.

Compact voice

Section 6

Revising, renewing or creating your Compact

Section 6
Revising, renewing or creating your Compact

In this section:
- Creating a local Compact
- Example: updating the Leeds Compact
- How Compact Voice can help

"In order to maintain public sector engagement and support to prioritise the Compact within Councils we refreshed our Compact and put codes of practice in one document. Every year we come up with new publicity, targeting councillors and officers in the district or county council."

Sarah Prior, Compact Officer, Compact for Devon

"We did a revision of the Compact for Leeds just as the budget was arising. It was useful to have a very recent document rooted in the current context. People may have negotiated something three years before and may have left and new people don't feel they own it. This is the same at the local level and at the political level. That's one reason to revise."

David Smith, Chair of Compact Implementation Group, Director, LeedsVoice

"Revising the Compact does cement the working relationships. It aids communication and helps us think through priorities."

Pat Fairfax, Community issues co-ordinator, Leeds council

Creating a local Compact

There are no rules about how a Compact should be structured or presented but what follows are some useful guidelines:

1. Good local Compacts are those which **reflect the needs, circumstances and aspirations of local partners** – the clue is in the name! A local Compact should be the product of an open discussion between local partners – in fact, its strength will likely be determined by the extent to which partners have been engaged in the process.

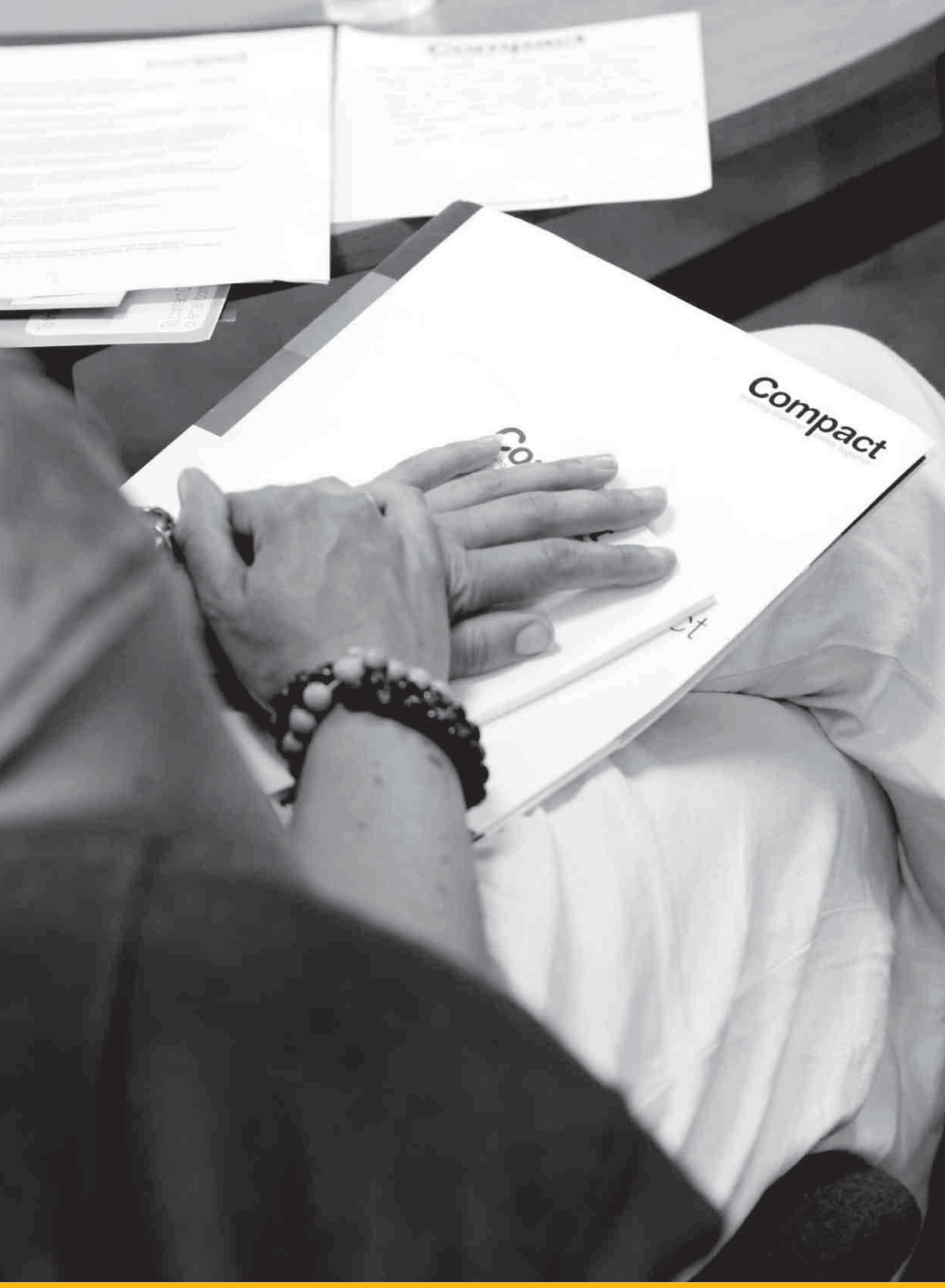
2. However, **the national Compact provides a useful template** on which local Compacts could be based or take their inspiration from. Indeed, some areas have adopted the national Compact as their local Compact as a temporary measure whilst they update their local document.

3. Local Compacts contain principles which provide a crucial framework for local relationships, but sometimes people find it hard to see how they affect their work on the ground. By providing **practical examples** (either real or hypothetical) it is possible to make the commitments in the document come alive to new audiences.

4. Some Compacts are designed documents with pictures whilst others are simple word documents. There is an argument that says that **giving the Compact a distinctive local visual brand can help to raise its profile** but style should not be substituted for substance.

5. **Backing a local Compact up with supporting documents**, such as guides and toolkits can ensure that people know how to use it, turning it from a wish-list into a powerful tool.

6. Why do all the hard work when you can **look at other local Compacts** and copy the best ideas from them?


Compact

Example: Updating the Leeds Compact

Leeds revised their Compact to bring it up to date with changes in the financial climate, tackle indifference from the voluntary and community sector, and lack of knowledge of the Compact from the statutory sector. The revision and subsequent promotion has achieved a huge amount of positive change.

The Compact group:

- Successfully requested a voluntary and community sector lead officer and a voluntary and community sector focused Councillor

  "There is no doubt that having those kinds of people with those labels definitely helped us feel that the council was taking the Compact more seriously."

  David Smith, Chair of Compact Implementation Group and Director of LeedsVoice (pictured)

- Set up 'Third Sector Leeds' – an alliance of key networks and larger organisations, whose members talk about and promote the Compact in meetings with both sectors

- Is using the new Compact to help clarify how the NHS and public health bodies can engage effectively with service users, and have put on a major event which focuses on this

- Developed a link with Leeds' 'Year of Volunteering', a volunteering toolkit explaining what the Compact means in practice, and a kitemark, which acts as a quality guarantee that organisations will meet Compact commitments on volunteering practice. This offers quality reassurance to potential volunteers and funders, resulting in less monitoring

How Compact Voice can help:

Compact Voice has developed a renewal support programme. An Engagement Officer can provide support, both in terms of advising on the process and also facilitating sessions. Sometimes local partners react better to a facilitator who is independent of local associations.

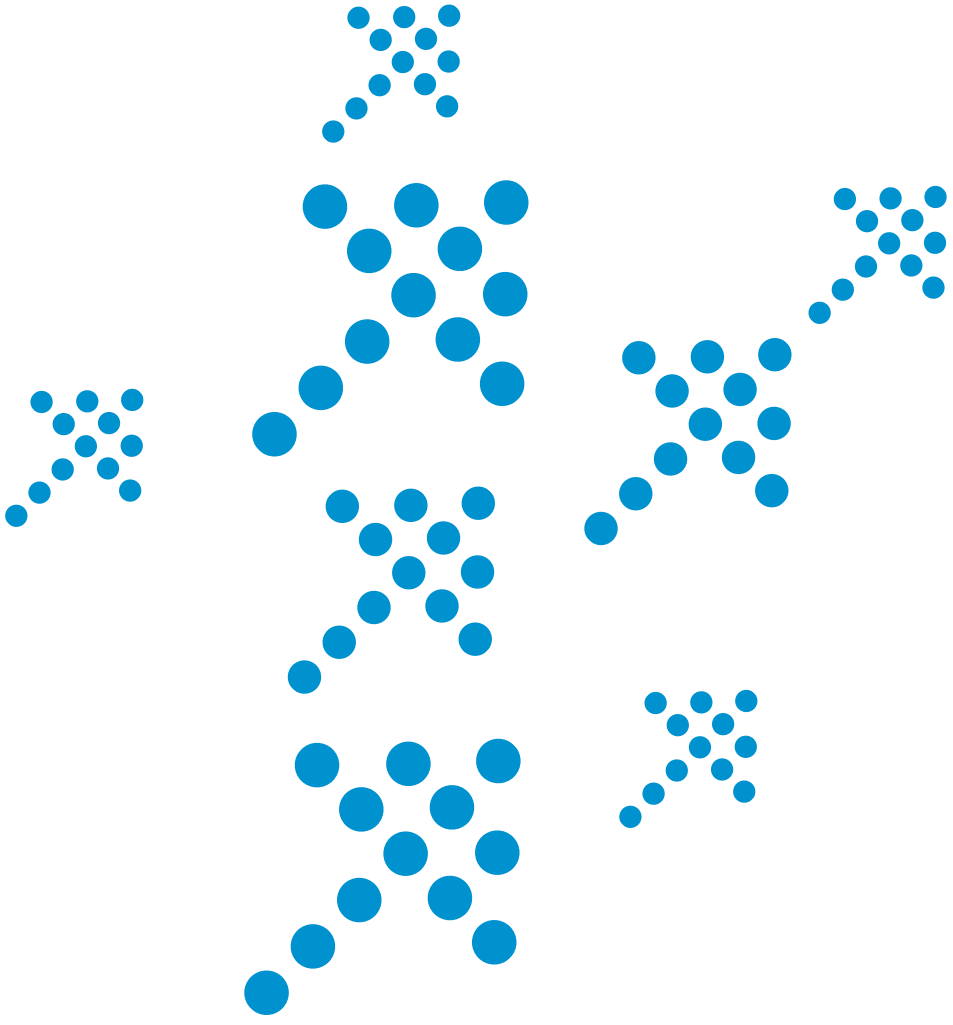
Please visit the Compact Voice website to book the 'Renewing your Compact' package free of charge from our training options.

We can

- Provide tailored support to help you renew your local Compact
- Share good practice about what's working well elsewhere.

Compact voice

Section 7
Addressing non-compliance



Section 7
Addressing non-compliance

In this section:
- How to challenge non-compliance
- The Compact Advocacy Programme
- The Compact and public law

When partners agree their local Compact, there is legitimate expectation that its principles and commitments will be followed in practice. When one or more partners do not follow a commitment this is considered to be Compact non-compliance.

The most common areas of non-compliance are:

- Shortened consultations
- Shortened notice period for ending or changing funding arrangements
- Not assessing the impact on service users or beneficiaries of a change to funding arrangements
- Lack of attempts to minimise monitoring burdens

Of course prevention is better than cure. The Compact isn't just a list of principles to bring out when things go wrong.

Established relationships and high awareness of Compact principles improve Compact compliance and can avoid breaches happening in the first place.

However, raising a challenge is not necessarily a negative move. Sometimes relationships improve as a result of a challenge. Using the Compact to challenge non-compliance can result in decisions being changed, bad practice being improved, and can enable more effective partnership working.

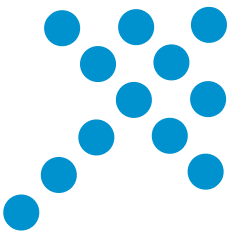
For an example of this, see the Thurrock case study in the publication Local Compacts at Work which can be found in the Resources section of the Compact Voice website: www.compactvoice.org.uk.

"The Compact is a tool for us both [voluntary and community and statutory sector] to use to get the best out of partnership working. It's not a weapon for the voluntary sector to use."

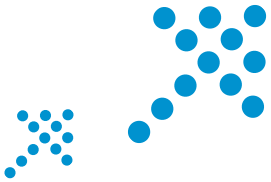
Liz Louch, Chief Executive, Ipswich and District Council for Voluntary Service

"The emphasis is on good relationships. You don't get public partners round the table if they think it's a council bashing exercise. It's important that the VCS know that it's important to abide by it and are operating within the Compact. For example you are obliged to inform the council if you are having a problem. It's not a one way street."

Sue Graham, Compact and Networks Officer, One Voice Network County Durham



Reasons for non-compliance	Considerations
Unavoidable Crisis or external factors overrode Compact compliance, for example a consultation less than 12 weeks long	Effort should still be made to mitigate the negative impact of non-compliance. In the case of a shorter consultation period, the public sector body should make every effort to circulate the consultation as widely as possible and assist with gathering responses
Mistake Lack of awareness or understanding of the local Compact principles or spirit, for example a prime contractor and/or their supply chains have not been adhering to the Compact	Anyone distributing funds on the government's behalf must adhere to the Compact. When entering a new partnership, or when working with new staff, ensure they are briefed on the local Compact
Management implementation failure Non-compliance with commitments or agreed procedures/processes not followed, for example Compact-compliance is not written into departmental business plans	Work towards getting high-level buy-in to the Compact. Leadership on Compact compliance will encourage wide-spread Compact working. Consider recruiting senior-level Compact champions across both sectors
Deliberate Manipulation, control, political expediency or exploitation of inequality in relationship, for example a public sector body disregards the need to assess the impact on service users before deciding to reduce or end funding	This requires a serious review of the whole relationship. Engage relevant stakeholders and lobby decision makers for change. Consider enlisting the help of an external facilitator



How to challenge non-compliance

Most local Compacts have mediation or dispute resolution procedures for addressing or resolving non-compliance. Usually the first step is to discuss the non-compliance and find solutions or learning points.

"The bit I always felt we got wrong was the dispute resolution process. The original was quasi-legal, but in practice getting everyone together around one table and working through issues was more effective than adversarial type processes outlined in the original Compact."

Martin Howie, Director,
Voluntary Action Lewisham

The Compact Advocacy Programme suggests the following before making a challenge:

1. **Research:** Build up a timeline and get an idea of how many other local organisations might be in the same position. Consider collaborating.

2. **Identify:** Which parts of the local (or national) Compact have not been followed?

3. **Decide on your objectives:** What do you want to achieve? Is it realistic? What would be a satisfactory result?

4. **Who should you contact?** Who are the relevant people in the public sector body? Should your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) be kept in the loop? Who are your local Compact officers? Would you like Compact Advocacy to review your plan of action? Do you want to take it as far as contacting your local media, Member of Parliament or Local Government Ombudsman?

5. **Action:** Raise your concerns at the earliest possible time in the best way. Is it meetings, phone calls, letters? See the TravellerSpace example at the end of this section for a model letter.

The Compact Advocacy Programme

The Compact Advocacy Programme is able to mediate disputes on your behalf, and help you try to reach an agreement. See the following Compact Advocacy Programme example for more details. They have also published a short guide called Effective Dispute Resolution Tactics, which is available in the Advice and Support section of www.ncvo-vol.org.uk.

The Local Government Ombudsman is another option that can be used if the local council's actions have caused an injustice.

Further information can be found at:

- Compact Advocacy Programme website: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compactadvocacy
- Compact Advocacy Case Studies: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compact-case-studies
- The Accountability and Transparency Guide: www.compactvoice.org.uk

Example: Compact Advocacy case

Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming, advocates for food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment and enrich society and culture.

Sustain had a funding arrangement with the London Development Agency (LDA) to deliver a project in London. The LDA withdrew funding for the project without Sustain receiving appropriate costs that they had legitimately incurred.

Sustain had written to the LDA to request their costs be released to them, but had received no response. Compact Advocacy wrote to the LDA to support Sustain's position on the basis that the Compact states that payment should be prompt and that organisations should be funded on a full cost recovery basis.

As a result, the LDA offered to settle the matter with Sustain, but not at the full cost rate that they were entitled to. Compact Advocacy continued to advocate on Sustain's behalf stating that they are entitled to recover all of the administrative and overhead costs that they had incurred. Following this correspondence, the LDA made an offer to Sustain to make a payment at the full cost.

The Compact and public law

Sometimes compliance can be encouraged by showing how the Compact links to the law by:

- Illustrating how it supports the implementation of legal requirements. For example Compact principles can be used to help deliver the public sector duty on equality by facilitating partnerships which can reach groups protected by equality legislation
- Showing how following Compact principles reduces the likelihood of a legal challenge. Some aspects of the Compact overlap with public law duties. For example although there is no duty in public law to consult, there is a duty to give those affected by a decision a fair hearing

"One of the difficulties has been people having some belief in the Compact's strengths. That's why we linked it with the judicial reviews and public law."

Belinda Lowis, Chief Officer, Chester-le-Street CVS (pictured above)

How does the Compact relate to public law?

The Compact is part of a public sector body's policy framework. A public sector body's policies and its previous behaviour can amount to the creation of legitimate expectation, a public law concept. If, for example, a council normally consults on major changes and normally adheres to Compact commitments around consultation, it could be argued that there was legitimate expectation that they would consult on a major policy change.

For example, in the court case of R (Berry) v Cumbria County Council in 2007, Judge Mackie said: **"It seems to me that the Compact was more than a wish list but less than a contract. It is a commitment of intent between the parties concerned."**

Example: Southall Black Sisters

A well-known public law case concerned Ealing Council withdrawing funding from Southall Black Sisters, who provide services to all BME women in Ealing experiencing domestic violence. The council intended to fund a service to "all individuals irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, race, faith, age, disability, resident within the Borough of Ealing experiencing domestic violence".

Southall Black Sisters made the point that specialist provision does not undermine social cohesion. Ultimately Ealing Council withdrew from the case, but the judge still made a ruling, quoting: 'the Compact … emphasises the importance of independent, non-profit organisations run by, for and located within black minority ethnic communities.'

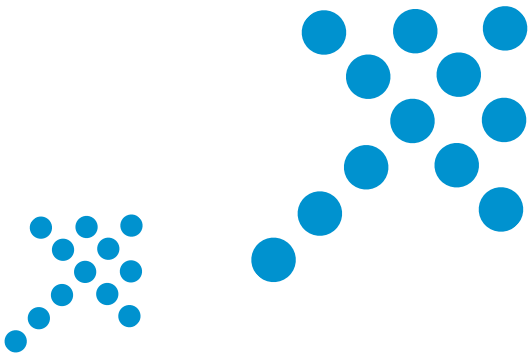
Further details of this case can be found on the Public Law Project's website at **www.publiclawproject.org.uk**.

Judicial review

A public sector body's decision can be subject to a judicial review: a court case where the judge looks at the public sector organisation's behaviour. Judicial review cannot decide that a decision is wrong, just that the way that the decision was made was wrong.

A judicial review challenge needs to be made as promptly as possible and within three months of when the decision you are challenging was made.

Remember - it can cost nothing to use the Compact, but taking a public sector body to court requires a solicitor and you may end up liable for the other side's costs as well.



Example: TravellerSpace, Cornwall
Using the Compact to challenge and clarify policies

TravellerSpace supports Gypsies, Irish Travellers and New Travellers in Cornwall and the South West to access the services and opportunities available to the wider community and to have a voice in decision and policy making processes.

TravellerSpace were informed by their local council that they were not eligible for Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) as they were a single interest group and not (yet) a registered charity. In response they made a 'Freedom of Information' request to the council's Equality & Diversity Officer and discovered that DRR was granted to other apparently single issue groups. TravellerSpace sent a letter pointing this out and referencing the equality and diversity codes of the Cornwall Compact:

> "TravellerSpace wishes to access the Cornwall Compact mediation process as we feel Cornwall Council has breached the code, particularly with regards to Equality & Diversity.

The Compact states that Cornwall Council must 'Operate fair and equal access, by groups, to funding programmes, particularly those that impact significantly on the 'protected characteristics'.

Gypsies and Travellers are legally recognised as ethnic groups and are protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010.

Travelling people make up a significant proportion of our society and yet remain one of the most marginalised groups. For TravellerSpace, Discretionary Rate Relief is a form of funding that we are being denied."

TravellerSpace copied the letter to all councillors and the Chief Executive of the council. The matter was resolved within ten days. DRR was granted. TravellerSpace have since become a registered charity.

How Compact Voice can help:

We can

- Advocate and intervene on your behalf
- Support you to challenge non-compliance
- Refer you to the Compact Advocacy Programme
- Provide examples of how poor decisions have been challenged elsewhere.

Acknowledgements

This guide was researched and written by Amber Alferoff with Adam Pickering.

Thank you to Ingela Andersson, Paul Barasi, Neena Bhati, Nicole Catenazzi, Tom Elkins, Rosalind Stannard, and Kelly Ventress.

And very grateful thanks to the following people who shared their insight into what makes local Compacts work:

Rob Allison, Director of Policy and Partnership, Voluntary Action Coventry

Lucy Ashall, Third Sector Development Officer, London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

Pat Fairfax, Community Issues Coordinator, Leeds council

Jacqui Foile, Chief Officer, Voluntary Action Epping Forest

Neil Frackelton, Sefton CVS Compact lead

Sue Graham, Compact and Networks Officer, One Voice Network County Durham

Martin Howie, Director, Voluntary Action Lewisham

Liz Louch, Chief Executive, Ipswich and District Council for Voluntary Service

Belinda Lowis, Chief Officer, Chester-le-Street & District CVS

Gev Pringle, Director, Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council

Sarah Prior, Compact Officer, Exeter CVS

Giles Rankin, Regeneration and Community Partnerships Manager, Islington Council

Keltie Seaber, Compact Officer, Cornwall VSF

Mike Sherriff, Chief Executive, Voluntary Action Islington

David Smith, Chair of Compact Implementation Group, Director, LeedsVoice

Tamsila Tauqir, Compact Action Advisor, Birmingham Voluntary Service Council

Darren Thomas, Haringey Compact Project Officer, HAVCO

Paul Tolley, Chief Executive, Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action

Donna Turnbull, Strategy and Policy Support Officer, Voluntary Action Camden

Monica Wambu, Senior Corporate Policy Manager, Surrey County Council

Dave Webb, Head of Revenues and Housing, Stratford on Avon council

Ian Willetts, Chief Executive, Walsall Voluntary Action